



Hybrid Meetings Policy

Scope

To set a policy for when and how Hybrid Public Meetings are held in the City of Rollingwood.

Background

From March 2020 through August 2021, public meetings were held via Zoom to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings to slow the spread of COVID-19. In September 2021, the Governor's orders waiving certain sections of the Open Meetings Act that allowed Zoom meetings during this time were lifted. At the August 9, 2021 Special City Council meeting, the City Council directed city staff to implement a hybrid meetings system to allow some flexibility for Councilmembers, Board and Commission Members and the public to participate in meetings virtually.

Definition

Hybrid Meeting – a public meeting in which a quorum of the governing body as well as the presiding officer is physically present at the meeting location and one or more members of the governing body are in attendance virtually via videoconference. The meeting must meet all the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act, specifically Sec. 551.127 regarding Videoconference Calls.

Policy

- A. As technology permits, all City Council, Board and Commission meetings that are open to the public will have a virtual participation option for the public. If a technical issue causes a meeting to be unable to be accessed by the public for virtual participation, the meeting does not need to be canceled.
- B. Requests for virtual participation in a meeting for Councilmembers or Board and Commission Members will be granted if one of the following situations applies:
 - a. (Preferred) The member has requested to participate virtually at least 96 hours (4 days) before the scheduled meeting and it has been confirmed that a quorum will be physically present without the requesting member physically present.
 - b. (Extenuating Circumstances) The member has requested to participate virtually up to 2 hours before the meeting, no other hybrid requests have been denied, and it has been confirmed that a quorum will be physically present without the requesting member physically present.
 - c. If the regular presiding officer of the governing body requests to participate virtually, and it has been confirmed that a quorum will be physically present without the requesting member physically present, another presiding officer must be secured before the request is approved.
- C. The face of each participant in the videoconference call, while that participant is

Commented [AW1]: Question for CEZ - If the agenda specifies a zoom link and password for the public to participate and there is a technical issue, can the meeting go on or would it need to be canceled?

Commented [CZ2R1]: There is no guidance on this, but I would argue that it does not have to be cancelled.

speaking, shall be clearly visible, and the voice audible, to each other participant and, during the open portion of the meeting, to the members of the public in attendance at the physical meeting location.

- D. The audio and video signals perceptible by members of the public at the location of the meeting must be of sufficient quality so that members of the public at each location can observe the demeanor and hear the voice of each participant in the open portion of the meeting
- E. All additional requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act must be adhered to in the implementation of the hybrid meeting.

Hybrid Meetings Policy Updates

City staff will review this document periodically to ensure that it contains up-to-date information. Any potential changes or updates that materially alter this document will be brought to City Council for approval.